Introduction

THE MAN WHO has been called the father of the holistic health movement never went to medical school. Although he was not a physician, his advice brought help and healing to the thousands of individuals who consulted him for various conditions, ranging from headaches and influenza to stomach ulcers, leukemia, and multiple sclerosis. Even today, more than half a century after his death, Edgar Cayce's recommendations are being studied and successfully applied by health care professionals and lay persons, who continue to find an inexhaustible resource in the more than fourteen thousand psychically channeled discourses that he provided during his lifetime. Approximately two-thirds of these discourses, referred to as readings, were related to questions of physical health. However, in true holistic fashion, the readings always addressed the involvement of mind and spirit in physical conditions, emphasizing that healing could not occur unless body, mind, and spirit were harmonized and brought into balance.

Edgar Cayce was a remarkable diagnostician, who, in his self-induced

hypnotic state, was able to telepathically "scan" another person's body and accurately determine its condition, along with symptoms and their causes, and to recommend therapies and remedies that would help to correct the ailment. Tapping into what the readings said was a pool of universal consciousness, Edgar Cayce was able to bypass the guessing stages of medical diagnosis and aim straight at the root cause of a pathological condition, while simultaneously designing a unique course of treatment that was most likely to benefit the person for whom help was being sought. It didn't matter whether that person was in the same room with Cayce or going about his or her activities in another town or country. Cayce was able to access the information pertaining to that individual with the same speed and apparent ease. However, the energy required to enter into and maintain an altered state of consciousness each time he gave a reading was considerable, and his health suffered as a result.

It was a price that Edgar Cayce, who was born in 1877 near Hopkinsville, Kentucky, willingly paid for the fulfillment of his ardent desire to be helpful to others. He had nurtured this wish from a very young age. He felt drawn to Christian ministry, and although his family's circumstances did not allow him to pursue the theological studies he aspired to, his extensive knowledge of the Bible, which he read from cover to cover once for every year of his life, paved the way for him to teach Sunday School. However, it was ultimately through his psychic readings that his prayers for a missionary life were answered on a scale much larger than he had imagined, for the spiritual wisdom contained in these readings continues to inspire and help people all over the world.

Even as a young boy, Edgar Cayce displayed special gifts and had the ability to communicate with those who had passed on. His favorite playmates were other-dimensional beings, such as elves and fairies. In school, the young Edgar had difficulty following the curriculum until he discovered that he was able to sleep on a book and remember its entire contents upon awakening. This helped his grades to improve dramatically. It was not until he reached his early twenties, however, that his remarkable powers became apparent. He had developed a condition known as *aphonia*, marked by the loss of his voice. There was no known cure, and Cayce and his family had almost resigned themselves

to the idea that he would have to live with this problem for the rest of his life. When offered the opportunity to consult a hypnotist, Edgar Cayce agreed to try a session, thinking that he had nothing to lose. During the experiment, while in a hypnotic state, Cayce spoke in a normal voice, accurately diagnosing the cause of his psychosomatic condition as nervous tension. He went on to recommend that he be given the hypnotic suggestion to increase circulation to the affected area, which would serve to normalize the condition. Miraculously, the suggestion worked, and Cayce regained the use of his voice.

Impressed with the remarkable results of the experiment, the hypnotist, who was also a student of osteopathy and a self-taught practitioner of suggestive therapeutics, encouraged Cayce to try out his newly discovered diagnostic powers on some of his clients who had failed to receive help from conventional medical doctors. In the ensuing experiments, the readings consistently proved accurate and helpful when the often unusual course of treatment they suggested was followed. The therapies and remedies that were prescribed in the readings appeared to incorporate the wisdom and knowledge of several different schools of healing. From diet and massage to herbal remedies and unique electromechanical appliances designed to regulate body energies, the recommendations did not appear to favor any particular discipline. However, they were often unorthodox and always aimed at balancing body, mind, and spirit to bring about complete and lasting healing.

No one was more surprised by the information that presented itself through him than Cayce himself. In his normal waking state, he had only a very basic understanding of anatomy and was unfamiliar with much of the medical terminology that formed part of the readings' vocabulary. Some of the medicaments and remedies mentioned were so unusual that even seasoned health professionals had never heard of them, yet they were ultimately found to exist and be effective.

For many years, Cayce refused to accept compensation for his readings, not wanting to use for personal gain a gift he had received from God. He provided a modest living for himself and his family through his work as a professional photographer. Eventually, however, the growing number of requests for readings forced him to dedicate himself to this calling on a full-time basis. When he died in 1945, Edgar Cayce left

the rich legacy of his readings, which had been stenographically recorded by his devoted secretary, Gladys Davis. Now fully catalogued and available on CD–ROM, the readings are accessible for study through the Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.) in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where Cayce and his family had settled in 1925. It was there that in 1929, backed by a group of supporters, Cayce realized his dream of establishing a hospital where the treatments recommended in the readings could be administered to patients. Although financial difficulties forced the hospital to close in 1931, the building is today once again part of the work begun by Cayce. It houses several of the A.R.E.'s management offices, as well as its Health and Rejuvenation Center, which offers Cayce–style treatments to the public, and the Cayce/Reilly School of Massotherapy, which provides professional training for massage therapists and offers a variety of holistic studies.

Dr. Harold J. Reilly, the founder of the school, was a physiotherapist, chiropractor, and naturopath. Although he and Edgar Cayce had never heard of each other, Reilly was singled out in the readings as the health professional best able to carry out many of the prescribed treatments. In 1930, when patients started coming to his practice in New York with referrals from Edgar Cayce, Reilly was surprised to find that the diagnoses and treatment recommendations the patients brought with them originated in psychic readings. The material presented by the patients seemed plausible enough, however, for the open–minded Reilly to carry out Cayce's instructions. Encouraged by the positive results of the treatments, Reilly became fascinated with the phenomenon of the psychic diagnostician and began a lifelong study of the readings. After the closure of his famous Reilly Health Institute in Rockefeller Center in 1965, Harold Reilly set up a physiotherapy clinic in Virginia Beach—the forerunner of today's Health and Rejuvenation Center.

Dr. Reilly's name became synonymous with the concept of Cayce–style therapeutic massage, hydrotherapy, and exercise. Even today, years after his death in 1987 at the age of 92, Reilly's best–selling book, *The Edgar Cayce Handbook for Health Through Drugless Therapies*, continues to educate its readers in the practical knowledge of Cayce's health programs, medically tested by the health professional who was specially chosen in the readings.

While the original Cayce hospital survived only two years from 1929 to 1931, Edgar Cayce's dream of a health establishment where the treatments conceived in the readings could be administered was again realized when the A.R.E. Clinic in Phoenix, Arizona, opened in 1970. Since its inception, thousands of patients have been treated there under the leadership and guidance of Dr. William A. McGarey, an internationally acclaimed physician and author of several books on the Cayce material.

Having researched and professionally applied the medical information in the Cayce readings for over forty years, McGarey remains one of the outstanding pioneers who have worked tirelessly to educate both health care professionals and lay persons about the importance of integrating body, mind, and spirit in all efforts to bring about healing. It is largely due to the unique combination of medical expertise and spiritual insight with which McGarey has approached this task that the Cayce therapies have become firmly established in the early history of modern holistic healing.

Today, many independent health professionals around the world continue to research and apply the suggestions from the Cayce readings. Dr. John O.A. Pagano, a chiropractic physician and author of the best-selling *Healing Psoriasis: The Natural Alternative* and *Dr. John's Healing Psoriasis Cookbook,* has had outstanding successes in curing many of the most stubborn cases of psoriasis with treatment methods that are based on the recommendations of Edgar Cayce. A look at the before-and-after photographs of some of Dr. Pagano's patients whose severely cracked and irritated skin became lesion-free within months of following the suggested treatment provides a glimpse of the enormous healing potential that such natural methods have.

Dr. Dudley Delany, a now retired chiropractor, massage therapist, and registered nurse, used the Cayce-recommended Radial Appliance, the Wet Cell Battery, and other suggestions from the readings to overcome multiple sclerosis, a disease considered to be incurable by mainstream medicine. Delany's inspiring book *The Edgar Cayce Way of Overcoming Multiple Sclerosis: Vibratory Medicine* is a fountain of hope for the estimated two and a half million people worldwide who suffer from this often debilitating condition.

Since 1989, in-depth research into the health information from the

Edgar Cayce readings has been undertaken in an organized manner through Meridian Institute in Virginia Beach, an independent nonprofit organization created with the goal to research holistic and integrative approaches to wellness and healing. Meridian Institute is working to establish protocols for the treatment of specific diseases based on the Edgar Cayce health readings. Its work is helping to promote the integration of mainstream medicine with alternative medicine and holistic modalities.

Today, more than half a century after Edgar Cayce's death, the health information from the Cayce readings remains at the cutting edge of modern holistic medicine—waiting to be explored, applied, and fully understood as the concepts of spirituality, psychoneuroimmunology, and mind–body healing are being validated by mainstream medical research.